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# **The Dynamics of Gang Criminality and Corruption in Nigeria Universities: A Time Series Analysis**

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The Dynamics of Gang Criminality and Corruption in Nigeria Universities:  
A Time Series Analysis

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study contributes to the understanding of the causal relationship between gang culture, criminality and corruption in Nigeria universities where both criminality and corruption are very high complementary variables. Writers on gang culture in Nigeria universities have largely omitted the empirical evaluation of the causal relationship between gang criminality and corruption. This study adopts the time-series models of Granger (1969) to investigate and explain the causality relationship of the variables. Using five years data (2005-2009) from 37 Universities across 36 States of Nigeria and Abuja, the federal capital territory; the results suggest that there is existence of reciprocal relationship between university gang culture, criminality and corruption. The results suggest that there is bi-directional causality relationship flowing between gang criminality and corruption in the universities.*

Keywords: Gang, Corruption, University, Nigeria, Education, Time Series, Criminality, Granger, Unit root, Causal link.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The quality and standards of university education in Nigeria has continued to dwindle over the past decade. Several commentators attribute the diminishing standards to poverty, inadequate government funding, and lack of necessary facilities for teaching and learning including the rising tide of corruption. However, amongst several possible factors causing the reduction in quality and standards, corruption stands prominent.

**THE PROBLEM**

There is lack of empirical studies on the causality relationship between gangs and criminality in Nigeria universities. Previous literature on the subject-matter concentrate almost wholly on the degree of violence associated with

university gang culture. Rotimi (2005) explains that young undergraduates and postgraduate students are attracted to the gangs for the lack of affection from families therefore, a great number of the gang members tend to come from single parents families. Rotimi further suggest that the youths that join the gangs on university campuses are often those that lacks self confidence and “are lonely, depressed, dejected, disorientated and frightened”.

Owoeye (1997) stated that the students that are most likely to join criminal gangs in the universities are males that are anxious about their masculinity and seeking some form of bravery. Other scholars have disputed the claim that criminal gangs are dominated by males; for example Maxson and Klein (1991); Campbell (1987 and 1991); Bjerregaard and Smith (1993); and Chesney-Lind (1993) found that since 1970 the

involvement of young females in criminal gangs has been rising progressively and significantly. Joe and Chesney-Lind (1995) reviewed more than twenty different studies on gangs and reached the conclusion that, irrespective of the glaring evidence of the involvements of females in criminal gangs, academic investigators tend to consider gang membership as male orientated venture thus, the law enforcement agencies, the general public, and even those in criminology who study delinquency, rarely, if ever, consider girls and their problems with the law (Joe and Chesney-Lind (1995, p.409).

The few known female criminal gang groups in Nigeria universities are as formidable and ferocious as the males. Taylor (1993) found that girls in criminal gangs are "just as capable as males of being ruthless".

The use of intimidation by lecturers to coerce students to pay bribes so as to receive good grades is all too familiar in Nigeria universities. In some instances, female students are coerced to pay in both cash and kind, meaning that the female students have to pay cash as well as intimidated to have sex with lecturers in order to secure passable and high marks in coursework and examinations.

The students that fail to comply sometimes are made to re-sit the modules several times and in some cases the students are denied the chances of graduation to such extent that some students withdraw from the university and, in other instances, students spend longer years in the university before graduating with very poor class of degree. This is particularly common with students from lower strata of the wealth of the society that either cannot afford to pay bribes to the corrupt lecturers or that the lecturers cannot be challenged by their poor parents.

In order to resist the frequent intimidation by lecturers, some students began to form gangs [campus cult] in order to counter the lecturers' intimidation and to resist the unlawful denial of accurate marks on course works. The gang groups

continue to evolve over time and became more sophisticated, deadly and even adopting criminal strategies to sustaining their activities.

The recruitment of new gang members are by both voluntary and force. In the first few weeks of every academic session, alumni members of the gang join forces with current students to embark of recruitment drive across the university campuses.

The gangs coerce new students by way of intimidation sometimes at gun-point forcing them to join the gangs. The initiations into the gangs are often violent involving torture, blood oaths of secrecy, forcing new male members to rape female students and sometimes to rape female staff of the university. Initiation into the female gang groups such as the Amazons involves new members being subjected to gang rape by several female members.

The first of the student gang group is widely believed to have been formed in the University of Ibadan in 1953 by seven students whose acclaimed reason for the formation of the gang was to resisting the injustices of the university authority towards students of poor background.

There are currently more than thirty different students gangs (cults) in Nigeria universities including: The Black axe, Black Berets, Black brothers, Black scorpions, Buccaneers (sea dogs), Egbe dudu, Eiye confraternity, Pirates, Thomas Sankara boys, Sons of the night, Vikings, green berets, KKK and female gangs known as Amazons.

There are estimated 200 gangs groups on university campuses with approximately 200,000 active members, across 36 States and the federal capital city of Abuja. The criminal activities of the university gangs though are mainly concentrated in the major urban areas; the gangs are also known to operate in the rural and suburban areas.

The various university gangs use arms to sustain their struggle against what they perceived as university corrupt culture. The acquisition of arms created

human rights abuses as various group fights for supremacy on the university campuses. Some lecturers soon join the students' gangs to guarantee the continuation of their corrupt lifestyles.

The gangs have since become messengers of death; where politicians hire the gang members for intimidation, torture, rape and assassination of political opponents and opponents' families across the country.

In 2008, human rights groups estimated that between 1993 and 2003, at least 200 students and lecturers were killed in gang related violence across the country. Gangs have been linked to several criminal activities outside the university campuses including armed robbery, kidnapping and internet fraud (Rotimi, 2005).

The alliance between the campus gangs and high ranking politicians in the country makes it difficult for the university authorities to discipline the members of the gangs. In some instances, the arrest and expulsion of gang members by the university often leads to backlash from politicians and, does lead to the dismissal of university administrators that fails to re-admit expelled gang members back to the university.

## METHODOLOGY

This study examined the causality relationship between gang criminality and corruption in Nigeria universities and the effect of the relationship on the standards and quality of education using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Time series empirical models were used involving the methods of Granger (1969), Johansen and Juselius (1990); Dickey and Fuller (1979 and 1981); Johansen (1988);

Engle (1982, 1993, 1996 and 1999) and Kwiatkowski, et. al. (1992).

The data for the analysis, were obtained as follows – data of gang criminality, was collected from the annual records of students' gang crime nationally from the Nigeria Police and Human Rights Watch Nigeria. Data of corruption in the universities was compiled from the reported incidence of corruption in the universities including arrest and dismissal of university Staff, the data was collected from the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASU) and from 37 universities. All the data collected covered January 2005 to December 2009.

Qualitative data were also used to flesh the quantitative interpretations; 800 subjects were surveyed between February 2005 and February 2009 across the country out of which 200 are graduates of Nigeria universities, 300 were current students, 300 were full time Staff of the universities. The survey sort for specific information on gangs formation, mode of operation, and impacts of gang culture including: (i) the organisational structures; (ii) gang funding; (iii) conflicts and rivalries; (iv) the levels of criminality; (v) territorial control; and, (vi) effects of gang criminality of university grading and award of degrees and certificates

The Granger causality model was used to investigate causality and the nature of the relationship between gang criminality and corruption in the universities in bivariate platform. Granger (1969) is appropriate for the study due to its accuracies in the determination of the causality relationship between variables. One variable is construed to Granger cause the other; if the change in one variable when measured leads to a change in the other within fixed time-series or lag.

## THE MODEL

Granger (1969) requires the testing of at least one hypothesis and one reverse hypothesis; the models represented in equations (1) and (2) were used:

$$\chi_t = \alpha_0 + \sum_{i=1}^p \alpha_i \chi_{t-i} + \sum_{j=1}^p \beta_j y_{t-j} + \varepsilon_{x,t} \quad (1)$$

$$y_t = \alpha_0 + \sum_{i=1}^p \alpha_i y_{t-i} + \sum_{j=1}^p \beta_j \chi_{t-j} + \varepsilon_{y,t} \quad (2)$$

In equations (1) and (2)  $\chi_t$  represent gang criminality;  $y_t$  represents corruption;  $p$  is the maximum lag of observations in the series;  $\alpha$  is the co-efficient of the model;  $\varepsilon_{x,t}$  and  $\varepsilon_{y,t}$  are the prediction errors of each of the series. If the variance of  $\varepsilon_{x,t}$

and  $\varepsilon_{y,t}$  is reduced by the inclusion of the  $x_t$  or  $y_t$  terms in the first (or second) equation, then it is said that  $y_t$  Granger causes  $x_t$  implying that  $y_t$  Granger-causes  $x_t$  if the coefficients in  $\beta_j y_{t-j}$  are significantly different from zero.

## RESULTS

### (i) Unit Root Tests

In time-series analysis especially that of Granger (1969, 1980, 1984 and 1991) and Engle (1982, 1993, 1996 and 1999), it is necessary to ascertain that the variables are stationary to avoid variable volatility. Table 1 presents the results of the Unit root tests. The unit root test is a very crucial step in econometric analysis involving time series data. In the event that the test results accept the null hypothesis of the existence of unit root, the outcome of the empirical analysis is likely to be

spurious; alternatively, where the unit root results indicate the acceptance of the null hypothesis that the series are stationary then it is good indication that the final outcome of the next range of tests will not be affected by variable volatility. In this study, I have chosen two distinctive models namely – the Augmented Dickey–Fuller (ADF) pioneered by Dickey and Fuller (1981) and the Kwiatkowski. et. al (1992) method (represented by the abbreviation, KPSS).

Table 1: Unit Root Test Results

SERIES	TEST STATISTICS		
	ADF	KPSS $\mu$	KPSS $\tau$
	LEVEL		
Gang Criminality	11.492** (4)	0.0120*** (4)	0.1000*** (4)
Corruption	10.171** (4)	0.1013*** (4)	0.1041*** (4)
	FIRST DIFFERENCE		
Gang Criminality	12.099** (4)	0.1009*** (4)	0.1032*** (4)
Corruption	9.958** (4)	0.0128*** (4)	0.0151*** (4)

The abbreviation  $\mu$  and  $\tau$  represent the models with trend and drift. The asterisk \*\* represents the rejection of the null hypothesis of unit root at 1% and 5% of the ADF critical values. The figures in parentheses are the lag lengths. The ADF lag selections are in compliance with the Akaike Information Criteria (AIC). The KPSS critical value is 0.216, 0.176, 0.146 and 0.119, in conformity with the upper tail critical values recommended by Kwiatkowski et. al., (1992). The asterisks \*\*\* represents acceptance of the null hypothesis of stationarity.

The result of the unit root test shown in Table 1 indicates that the series are stationary. I proceeded to conduct the co-integration test to ascertain that the variables are co-integrated.

(ii) Cointegration tests

The methods of Johansen (1988); and, Johansen and Juselius (1990) were deployed using the recommended two steps, which are the “trace test” and “maximum Eigenvalue test”:

(a) The trace test ( $\lambda_{\text{trace}}$ ) is represented as follows:

$$\text{Trace} = -T \sum_{i=r+1}^n \log(\hat{\lambda}_i) \quad (1)$$

In equation (1); the null hypothesis is that the cointegration vectors is  $\leq r$  and the alternative hypothesis that the cointegration vectors = r.

(b) The maximum Eigenvalue test ( $\lambda_{\text{max}}$ ) is represented as follows:

$$\lambda_{\text{max}} = -T \log(1 - \hat{\lambda}_i) \quad (2)$$

In equation (2) the null hypothesis is that the cointegration vectors = r as opposed to the optional null hypothesis that the cointegration vectors = r+1. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The Results of the Johansen Cointegration Test

Results for $x_t$ and $y_t$ Series				
Null hypothesis	Maximum Eigenvalue	1% Critical value	Trace Statistic	5% Critical value
Gang criminality ( $x_t$ )				
$R = 0$	10.140**	11.423**	11.231**	7.800**
$R < 1$	5.100**	5.372**	5.099**	8.491**
Corruption ( $y_t$ )				
$R = 0$	6.164**	5.000**	6.872**	6.561
$R < 1$	5.010	5.308	7.122	14.319
** Implies rejection of the null hypothesis of NO COINTEGRATION at 1% and 5% critical level				

The results of the cointegration tests show that the null hypothesis of “NO COINTEGRATION” is rejected meaning that the variables are cointegrated.

(iii) Granger Causality Tests

The Granger causality tests were conducted by using the *Microfit 5.0*. The software utilises the bivariate linear auto-regressive platform of the parameters of each of the variable  $x_t$  and  $y_t$ . The results of the Granger causality tests are summarised in Table 3. The result shows that there is two-causality relationship flowing between university gang culture/gang criminality and corruption in Nigeria universities.

Table 3: Results of the Granger Causality tests

Null Hypotheses	Observations	F-Statistic	P-Value
University gang culture and gang criminality Granger causes corruption in the universities	60	63.547	-0.0013***
Corruption in Nigeria Universities Granger causes gang culture and gang criminality	60	56.720	0.00141***
*** Implies acceptance of the null hypotheses at 1% and 5% critical levels			

(iv) Ordinary Least Square Regression (OLSR)

I conducted the regression of the two sets of variables to finding the possible long-run equilibrium relationship using the ordinary least square (OLS) with the Microsoft Excel for windows 2007. Table 4 presents the summary of the results.

Table 4: SUMMARY OF THE ORDINARY LEAST SQUARE (OLS)

SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.883271
R Square	0.829646
Adjusted R Square	0.807107
Standard Error	11.42098
Observations	60

ANOVA

	<i>Df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	2	844991.0088	99101.376	27.52011	0.0002213***
Residual	58	9314.290189	763.1212		
Total	58	102067.37892			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>
Intercept	4.754848	13.95407110	0.003510	0.01781012	-130.7265
X Variable 1	1.0351532	0.008912419	0.109853	0.0002213***	0.0040692

\*\*\* Indicates significance at 1%, 5% and 10% critical value

In Table 4 the result show that the coefficient of determination is 0.829646 implying that at least 82% of  $y_t$  is capable of explaining  $x_t$ , thus, 82% of the incidence of university gang criminality in Nigeria is explainable by the prevalence of corruption in the universities and, the probability of a contrary explanation is less than 1% in that  $p \leq 1$  or 0.0002213.

DISCUSSION

The results of the empirical analysis show that there is bi-directional causality relationship between gang criminality and corruption in the universities thus, gang culture causes criminality and corruption and, corruption also causes gang criminality thereby reinforcing gang culture.

The result of the ordinary least square regression show that the causal links between the variables are of long run equilibrium nature; this means that the longer the persistence of one variable, the

longer the other shall prevail. The co-integration test results reveal that both corruption and criminal gang culture are integrated in the same order meaning that, both variables are so interlinked to the extent that only the eradication of one variable will successfully diminish the other.

The study finds the public funded universities including (States and Federal) lacks the authority to root out corruption and gang culture. On the other hand, the very few accredited private universities are able to keep maximum control on the issues.

There is significant rise in the incidence of female students engaging in prostitution to raise fund to be able to bribe lecturers in order to gain pass marks in coursework and examinations over the past ten years. The study also finds that, grades are negotiable; the amount of money paid by the student determines the scores awarded. In essence, every aspect of the assessment process is apportioned prices by corrupt lecturers.



The study finds that gang members use intimidation, actually and grievous bodily harm against lecturers enabling them to secure good grades thereby skipping the payment of bribes. Some lecturers enrol in the students' gangs to fortify themselves against intimidation by gangs and to enabling the lecturers to further their corrupt practices. Lecturers that are members of the students' criminal gang, the students in the same gang as the lecturer pays reduced rate bribe and sometimes bribe payment is waived as gesture for being in the same gang group. Alternatively, students that are of different gang group as the lecturer intimidates the lecturer forcing him to award good grades; this often lead to arms clashed between rival gangs, consequently causing severe injuries and deaths. Gangs also clash for territorial supremacy within and outside the universities.

The study finds that only 9% of students' complaints of corruption, sexual harassment, intimidation and victimisation are investigated by the universities and, 0.5% of the lecturers are suspended or dismissed for participating in the criminal activities and, 98% of the dismissed lecturers are recalled back to their post within one year. Approximately 44% of the complaints by students and Staff against the gang members are investigated by the universities; a quarter of the investigation result to the removal of the offending students from the universities and, 98% of the excluded offenders are re-admitted back to the universities within six months.

Approximately 83% of university gang members own gun and, 90% are regular users of narcotics; 20% of university criminal gang members become policy makers in the government after graduation and, 67.7% of female and 39.4% of male graduates from publicly funded universities in Nigeria cannot effectively defend their qualifications upon graduation. This has serious implication for the overall growth and development of the country.

The perverse nature of gang culture in the universities has turned the institutions to breeding grounds of vices. Gang members from the universities are actively engaging in armed robbery, hired assassinations, kidnapping and the formation of fragments of resistance organisations to fighting government and private enterprises. The study finds that university gang members have been recruited into both the insurgency and counter-insurgency groups in the Niger Delta causing havoc and distorting crude oil production; elsewhere in the country, university gangs regularly causes breach of peace, for instance in the northern part of Nigeria the gangs engage in religious violence by organising riots and the use of lethal force against persons that opposes their religious views.

Contrary to previous articles and press publications that describes the criminal gangs in Nigeria universities as "Secret Cults" and "Campus Secret Cults" (e.g. Adelola, 1997; Aguda, 1997; Awe, 2001; Elegbeleye, 1997; Ogunbameru, 1997; Owoeye, 1997; Owoeye, 1997; and Rotimi, 2005); this study finds that the gang members are known by peers and other members of the universities in which they operate though the initiation of new members and meetings are privately conducted, the gangs are not "secret cults" but formidable, public criminal groups whose motives of operation are wide ranging and brutal. The funding of gangs are derived from multiple sources including: kidnapping for ransom, donations by alumni members, levies of members, retainer funds from corrupt politicians and religious leaders, drug dealing, arms sales, forced and organised prostitution, and bribes from university Staff seeking protection.

In terms of policy implication, the study suggests full or partial privatisation of the states and federal universities across the country. Where privatisation option is chosen, foreign direct investors should be considered to engaging in the running of the universities in joint venture with the

various national authorities currently administering the universities. Alternatively, the Nigeria University Commission (NUC) should engage directly with the assessment procedures of the universities by way of regular evaluation of standards and quality of the universities; there should impromptu inspection of the universities and covert investigations of the criminal activities and corruption. The universities should be banned from internally investigating the lecturers. The NUC should setup an independent panel where students and lecturers can directly report all incidence of victimisation, sexual harassment, intimidation and corrupt practices, the reports should be investigated and offenders should be disciplined and where necessary, charged.

### CONCLUSION

It is highly unlikely that the quality and standard of university education in Nigeria will ever improve in the current crime ridden university atmosphere. It is only the federal government that can take reasonable steps to obliterating the current dangerous trend of corruption and gang crimes. Unless drastic policies and actions are put in place to address the situation, there will be severe shortage of efficient and effective labour force in the country in the very near future and, this is likely to diminish social, economic and political growth and development. There is also the possibility of the spread of gang criminality to other countries in the region as students cross national frontiers for studies and for employment.

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